

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel Claims 12 to 18, 42 to 55, 57 to 62, 64 to 66, 68 to 73 and 75 to 79 without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Please amend the remaining claims as indicated below.

1. (Previously Presented) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus comprising:
 - a light source having a plurality of light beam emitting sections;
 - a light deflector for deflecting a plurality of light beams emitted respectively from the plurality of light beam emitting sections of said light source;
 - a scanning optical system for focusing the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector on a surface to be scanned; and
 - a photodetector for controlling a timing of a start of scanning of the plurality of light beams by detecting at least one of the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector as at least one detection light beam,
 - wherein the timing of the start of scanning is controlled to align the centers of scanning areas of the plurality of light beams with each other on the surface to be scanned while allowing starting points of scanning of the plurality of light beams to differ from each other when the plurality of light beams have respective wavelengths that are different from each other.

2. (Previously Presented) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a detection optical element for converging the at least one detection light beam and leading the at least one detection light beam to said photodetector,
wherein said detection optical element has its optical surfaces arranged orthogonally relative to the at least one detection light beam.

3. (Original) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said detection optical element comprises an anamorphic lens.

4. (Original) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said detection optical element is made of a plastic material.

5. (Original) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said scanning optical system comprises a refraction optical element and a diffraction optical element.

6. (Original) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said refraction optical element and said diffraction optical element are made of a plastic material.

7. (Original) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said detection optical element and said refraction optical element are integrally formed by using a plastic material.

8. (Previously Presented) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising an incident optical system for leading the plurality of light beams emitted from said light source to said optical deflector.

9. (Previously Presented) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said incident optical system comprises a first lens for collimating each of said plurality of light beams emitted from said light source and a second lens for focusing each of said plurality of collimated light beams on the deflection plane of the optical deflector as a linear image extending in the main-scanning direction.

10. (Original) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said detection optical element and said second lens are integrally formed by using a plastic material.

11. to 39. (Cancelled).

40. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:

a multibeam scanning optical apparatus as defined in any one of claims 1 to 10, ~~12 to 18 and 42 to 62~~ 56 and 80; and

an image carrier arranged on the surface to be scanned.

41. to 55. (Cancelled)

56. (Previously Presented) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said photodetector controls a time of a start of scanning of the plurality of light beams by detecting all of the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector as detection light beams.

57. to 62. (Cancelled)

63. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus comprising:
light source means including a plurality of light beam emitting sections;
light deflector means for deflecting a plurality of light beams emitted respectively from the plurality of light beam emitting sections;
scanning optical system means for focusing the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector means on at least one surface to be scanned;
photodetector means for controlling a timing of a start of scanning of the plurality of light beams by detecting at least one of the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector means as at least one detection light beam; and

at least one image carrier arranged on the at least one surface to be scanned, wherein the timing of the start of scanning is controlled to align the centers of scanning areas of the plurality of light beams with each other on the at least one surface to be scanned while allowing starting points of scanning of the plurality of light beams to differ from each other when the plurality of light beams have respective wavelengths that are different from each other.

64. to 66. (Cancelled)

67. (Currently Amended) A multibeam scanning optical apparatus according to Claim 1, comprising:

_____ a light source having a plurality of light beam emitting sections;

_____ a light deflector for deflecting a plurality of light beams emitted respectively from the plurality of light beam emitting sections of said light source;

_____ a scanning optical system for focusing the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector on a surface to be scanned; and

_____ a photodetector for controlling a timing of a start of scanning of the plurality of light beams by detecting at least one of the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector as at least one detection light beam,

wherein the at least one detection light beam does not pass through said scanning optical system; and

wherein the timing of the start of scanning is controlled to align the centers of scanning areas of the plurality of light beams with each other on the surface to be scanned while allowing starting points of scanning of the plurality of light beams to differ from each other when the plurality of light beams have respective wavelengths that are different from each other.

68. to 73. (Cancelled)

74. (Currently Amended) A multibeam scanning An image forming apparatus according to Claim 67, further comprising:

light source means including a plurality of light beam emitting sections;

light deflector means for deflecting a plurality of light beams emitted respectively from the plurality of light beam emitting sections;

scanning optical system means for focusing the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector means on at least one surface to be scanned;

photodetector means for controlling a timing of a start of scanning of the plurality of light beams by detecting at least one of the plurality of light beams deflected by said light deflector means as at least one detection light beam, and

at least one image carrier arranged on the at least one surface to be scanned;

wherein the at least one detection light beam does not pass through said scanning optical system, and

— wherein the timing of the start of scanning is controlled to align the centers of scanning areas of the plurality of light beams with each other on the at least one surface to be scanned while allowing starting points of scanning of the plurality of light beams to differ from each other when the plurality of light beams have respective wavelengths that are different from each other.

75. to 79 (Cancelled)

80. (New) A multibeam scanning apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein said photodetector and the center of a scanning width in the main scanning direction on the surface to be scanned are optically equivalent.